above the MSP is also being paid to farmers. Similarly in Chhattisgarh the State Government/its agencies *i.e.* State Cooperative Societies are undertaking procurement of paddy under decentralized procurement scheme at MSP. Instructions have been issued to the FCI to ensure that necessary proof/documents are obtained from the millers at the time of procurement to the effect that the benefit of MSP/special drought relief price has been passed on to the farmers.

Development of NER

†229. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have worked out any ambitious plan for the social-economic development of North Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that many pockets of the North Eastern Region have been lagging behind as far as development is concerned, because of having no direct links with national highways; and

(d) if so, the steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (DR. C.RTHAKUR): (a) and (b) Each state of the North Eastern Region pursues its development through its Five Year Plans and Annual Plans. In order tq boost the development in the North Eastern Region, the Union Government has taken up various initiatives in the recent past.

East Union Ministry/Department (except those specifically exempted) is required to spend at least 10% of its Gross Budgetary Support for the specific programmes in the North East. The unspent amount with respect to 10% norm is pooled in a Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources. Besides, the North Eastern Council (NEC) was setup with the objective of securing a balanced development of the North Eastern Region, which prepares its Five Year Plans in consultation with the State Governments and the Planning Commission. The NEC attempts to formulate a unified and coordinated regional plan in regard to matters of common interest. In

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

addition to projects which are financed by the NEC the Department of Development of North Eastern Region also finances infrastructure projects under the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR).

The project being funded by NEC and under NLCPR are mainly for physical and social infrastructure which include power, transmission and distribution lines, promotion of agro based industries, construction of roads and bridges, provision and augmentation of water supply, upgradation of airports, improvement of air-connectivity, setting up and maintenance of educational and medical institutions, support for manpower development etc. The details are available at the Department of Development of North Eastern Region's website: www.northeast.nic.in

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India had also announced an Agenda for socio-economic development of the North Eastern Region on 22nd January 2000 at Shillong.The Agenda covers 28 Programmes/Schemes relating to the Development of the Power Sector, Border Trade, Horticulture, Rural Infrastructure, Roads and Air-Links, Medical and Health Services, Industrial Training Institutes, Information Technology, Border Fencing and Upgradation of Police Infastructure.The details are available at the Prime Minister's Office website: www.pmindia.nic.in

(c) and (d) Due to difficult topographical and geographical conditions as well as on account of some other reasons, some pockets of North Eastern Region are less developed. However, to improve the connectivity in the States in North Eastern Region, roads are being funded by North Eastern Council and under Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR), Central Road Fund and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) etc. As a special dispensation to North Eastern Region including Sikkim, the minimum requirement of providing connectivity to villages have been relaxed from minimum population of 500 to 250.

Construction of bridges and roads in NER

230. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal from the Govermment of Assam has been received for construction of a bridge at Daria of Majuli Island and improvement of NLK road;